

January 22, 2010

Washington, DC – Last January, Rep. Ben Ray Luján had the honor of being sworn into Congress. With input from constituents throughout New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District – Rep. Luján has stood up for the people of New Mexico during these difficult economic times. While many are still struggling in a difficult economy, Rep. Luján continues to fight for New Mexicans. Rep. Luján worked with his colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass health insurance reform and clean energy reform, while investing in our communities and preventing credit card companies and Wall Street banks from taking advantage of New Mexico families. These steps will help create jobs, make health insurance more affordable, and prevent banks and credit card companies from raising rates that make it harder for families to make ends meet.

In 2009, Rep. Luján authored and passed legislation to fund environmental and energy research at our national laboratories, and he emerged as leader in clean energy, chairing the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Task Force on Green Economy and Renewable Energy. Rep. Luján has extensively toured the 3rd Congressional District to hear from the people of New Mexico, visiting every county in the district. Since January 2009, Rep. Luján has traveled over 16,000 miles in the district, making 180 visits to local communities.

Getting Our Economy Back on Track

During these difficult economic times, families are struggling as jobs are lost, hours and pay are cut, medical bills can't be paid, homes are lost to foreclosure, and families are being taken advantage of. Rep. Luján is working hard to get our economy back on track. Rep. Luján will build on the work he has done during the first session of Congress to help save and create American jobs, while standing up for New Mexican families and protecting consumers. He cosponsored the Credit Cardholder's Bill of Rights, which will hold credit card companies accountable and safeguarding consumers. And Rep. Luján took on Wall Street by demanding that they fix the problems that got us into our current financial mess. Rep. Luján is also a member of the House Democratic Jobs Task Force.

- Reinvesting on Our Communities

- o **Rep. Luján supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan** which has made important broad investments, saving jobs of teachers, police and fire fighters while investing in roads, bridges and other important infrastructure. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will also help families make ends meet by providing a tax credit for 95 percent of all workers. In New Mexico, an estimated 684,000 workers are eligible for the credit.

- Holding Wall Street Accountable

- o Rep. Luján supported the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2009, which ends predatory lending practices, prevents costly taxpayer bailouts, creates tough new rules on the riskiest financial practices, and improves oversight and enforcement. **Rep. Luján successfully offered an amendment**

- to prevent too big to fail banks from being created. Rep. Luján's amendment keeps banks from merging with nonbank entities if the new merged bank would then constitute over 10 percent of all U.S. banking deposits. The Luján amendment was included in the managers' amendment and passed by the House.

- Taking on Credit Card Companies

o Families throughout New Mexico are struggling to make ends meet, and predatory and unfair credit practices are making it harder for them. Rep. Luján is working hard to stand up for them in Congress. **Rep. Luján co-sponsored the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights**, which was recently passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama. The comprehensive credit card reform legislation will protect New Mexican families by leveling the playing field between credit card companies and consumers, and increasing protections against unfair and misleading credit card practices.

· Ending the Wall Street Bailout

o Rep. Luján voted against releasing the second half of the Wall Street bailout funds, and he **supported legislation that would require unused bailout money to help small businesses create jobs**

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· Making a Commitment to Fiscal Responsibility

o Rep. Luján is a cosponsor of PAYGO – which requires legislation to be budget neutral. For eight years, we had policies that plunged our country into debt and sent our deficit soaring. With two wars, tax cuts for the rich, and a corporate bailout, the last administration turned surpluses into deficits. **By committing to PAYGO legislation, we can reduce our deficit and restore fiscal responsibility.**

Making America Energy Independent and Creating New Energy Jobs

Rep. Luján is committed to ending America's dependence on foreign oil and producing affordable, sustainable energy. Rep. Luján has worked with his colleagues to make New Mexico and America a leader in a clean energy economy. Rep. Luján is the chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Task Force on Green Economy and Renewable Energy. He is also a member of the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition and the Natural Gas Caucus.

- Rep. Luján voted for the American Clean Energy and Security Act, which will create clean energy jobs, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and save billions of dollars long term. The Act included **language that Rep. Luján worked on to provide funding for clean energy job training and include Hispanic Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges as Innovation Hubs** for clean energy research.

- Rep. Luján **introduced the Community College Energy Training Act of 2009**, which will provide training for other energy-related occupations, including energy-efficient construction and retrofitting, recycling and waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and sustainable agriculture.

- Rep. Luján voted for the Solar Technology Roadmap Act, which will encourage job creation and innovation in the clean energy industry. Rep. Luján is a cosponsor of the legislation, which would require the Secretary of Energy to develop a comprehensive roadmap for solar research and development. Rep. Luján **included an amendment that encourages the development of advanced direct current and superconducting technologies** that have the potential to carry high levels of power over long distances.

- **Rep. Luján co-authored the SOLAR Act** to promote net metering, which promotes the generation and use of renewable energy in homes and offices. This legislation will help save families money, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and move our country toward a clean energy economy. Net metering provides energy consumers with the opportunity to produce their own power through solar panels and other renewable energy generators.

- Rep. Luján voted in favor of the 21st Century Green High-Performing Public Schools Facilities Act, which will encourage the development of a clean energy economy by providing funding for

energy efficient school construction. Such construction will modernize schools, create clean energy jobs and improve school quality that can help student achievement. **Rep. Luján's amendment, included in the legislation, encourages energy efficiency savings and promotes sustainability by allowing for the construction of greenhouses, gardens, and other environmentally friendly facilities.**

- Rep. Luján supported the Natural Gas Vehicles Research and Development Act which will provide for a program of research, development, and demonstration on natural gas vehicles. He also cosponsored the New Alternative Transportation to Give Americans Solutions Act of 2009 (NAT GAS Act) and wrote **a letter to President Obama encouraging the President to consider natural gas vehicles as part of his plan to reduce government vehicles' petroleum use by 30 percent.**

Making Health Care Affordable and Accessible for New Mexicans

Too many families are struggling with the high costs of health insurance. The costs aren't just hurting families, it is driving up costs for businesses, which is making it harder for everyone during these difficult economic times. Rep. Luján supports comprehensive health insurance reform that makes health care affordable and accessible for American families. Rep. Luján has been an outspoken proponent of health insurance reform, advocating for a public option and joining with his colleagues to support action that will help our economy and help families.

- Rep. Luján **voted to pass SCHIP, which will provide health coverage for over 32,000 children in New Mexico and 11 million low-income, uninsured children nationwide.** Families in New Mexico are **struggling during these difficult economic times**

, and an expansion of health care coverage for low-income, uninsured children will help children and families throughout the state. In a time of rising unemployment, it is especially important to make sure that parents are able to get their children the health care they need to stay healthy and active. By passing this legislation, we are investing in our children's futures. Healthy children attend school, participate in after school activities, and are better equipped to put themselves on a path to success.

· Rep. Luján joined his colleagues in the House of Representatives to **pass comprehensive health insurance reform** that will provide increased security and stability for those with insurance, protect individuals from unfair insurance company practices, and make insurance more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. This legislation will end insurance company discrimination and cherry-picking, make coverage more affordable, and provide more options for consumers. It will also level the playing field between insurance companies and consumers – ending discrimination against those with pre-existing conditions.

Improving Education in New Mexico

Rep. Luján understands that investing in our children's education is the most important thing we can do to ensure a sustainable future for our country. Today's classrooms should provide a positive learning environment where students are encouraged to challenge themselves and achieve their goals.

· Rep. Luján **introduced the Community College Energy Training Act of 2009**, which will cover other energy-related occupations including energy-efficient construction and retrofitting, recycling and waste reduction, water and energy conservation, and sustainable agriculture. The

Community College Energy Training Act of 2009 will

give community colleges and students the opportunity to lead in a clean energy economy and grow a skilled workforce that can help make the United States a leader in clean energy production.

· Rep. Luján voted to pass the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, which **provides funding for schools that will help protect teacher jobs, maintain programs for children with disabilities, and help students get the education they need** to prepare themselves for the jobs of the future.

· Rep. Luján has also **fought for colleges and universities in New Mexico** by making sure that Hispanic Serving Institutions and Tribal Colleges would have improved opportunities to benefit from innovative research programs in the American Clean Energy and Security Act.

· Rep. Luján voted to pass the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, which will help America produce the most college graduates by 2020 by **making college accessible and affordable**. It will also strengthen community colleges and training programs to help build a highly-skilled, innovative, 21st century workforce ready for the rigors of a global economy.

· **Rep. Luján is committed to supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) curriculum in our schools** to ensure that our children are prepared to compete in a global economy. Rep. Luján cosponsored and voted to pass the STEM Education Coordination Act, which will coordinate STEM education activities across the federal government. Rep. Luján believes that the federal government and our national laboratories can play an important role in STEM education at all levels because of the abundant science and technology resources at our research agencies.

Standing up for Our Veterans

Our nation's veterans and military service men and women are the defenders of our freedom. Rep. Luján is committed to standing up for New Mexico's veterans and making sure that our veterans get the benefits they have earned and deserve.

- Rep. Luján has stood up for our veterans – **supporting legislation to make advanced investments for the Department of Veterans Affairs**

- This bill provides the VA with the ability to plan ahead to deliver care designed to best meet the needs of veterans in New Mexico and throughout the country.

- Rep. Luján **encouraged businesses to take advantage of a tax credit**, expanded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, that **rewards businesses that hire returning veterans**

- He sent a letter to each Chamber of Commerce in the 3rd Congressional District, encouraging them to inform their membership about the credit and offering them assistance with their outreach efforts.

- **Rep. Luján invited Iraq and Afghanistan veterans to his offices to sign up for the new GI Bill when it came into effect, making sure veterans had information on the benefits and making it easier for rural veterans who may not have access to computers to sign up.** Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have an opportunity to receive significant education benefits under the new GI Bill.

Ending the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

New Mexicans are serving bravely and honorably in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Rep. Lujan strongly supports the service of our troops. He has visited both Iraq and Afghanistan to see the work our troops are doing, to thank them for their service and to talk with the commanders on the ground.

- In August, Rep. Luján visited Iraq and Afghanistan, speaking with officials including General Stanley McChrystal, the commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghan President Hamid Karzai, and Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, a United States diplomat to Afghanistan.

- In September, Rep. Luján and 57 of his colleagues sent a letter President Obama urging him to reject a troop increase. In June, Rep. Luján voted in favor of an amendment that would have required the Secretary of Defense to provide Congress, by the end of the year, with an outline of its exit strategy for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. The amendment was considered as part of the FY 2010 National Defense Authorizations Act (H.R. 2647). The amendment failed by a vote of 138 to 278. There was a similar standalone bill introduced earlier by Rep. James McGovern (D-MA), HR 2402, which Rep. Luján cosponsored.

- Rep. Luján believes that President Obama has outlined clear withdrawal dates in Iraq – with a goal of withdrawing all combat troops by August 2010. The benchmarks are being met, and the Iraqis are beginning to take responsibility for their own country. These are positive steps. Rep. Luján believes that while President Bush never should have invaded Iraq in the first place, it is important that we support our troops as they continue this withdrawal. **Rep. Luján will be following developments in the country closely, especially the withdrawal of troops to make sure that we are reaching our goals.**

Changing the Way Washington Does Business

Rep. Luján believes that Washington needs to change the way it does business. He supports campaign finance reform, and he has worked to make the legislative process more open and transparent.

- Rep. Luján **supports campaign finance reform** legislation, the Fair Elections Now Act, which will allow candidate to run for office with the support of small donors and limited public financing.

- Rep. Luján also joined with his colleagues to write a letter asking House leadership to **make legislation publicly available online for 72 hours before any vote**

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Protecting New Mexico's Land and Water

New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District is known for its beautiful landscapes and natural resources. Rep. Luján is working to protect and preserve New Mexico's resources.

· **Rep. Luján introduced the National Environmental Research Park bill, which will promote environmental science programs**

at Los Alamos National Laboratory by authorizing funding for its Environmental Research Park. The legislation provides important guidance for the Parks' research, development, education, and outreach activities.

The legislation passed the House

and is now under consideration in the Senate.

· Early in the 111th Congress, Rep. Luján had an historic opportunity to support two very important pieces of legislation designed to protect America's beautiful landscapes and the natural resources associated with them. The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act was signed into law by President Obama and will benefit our entire nation. Several elements in this Act are designed to **preserve historical sites, protect forest lands and wildlife habitat, and assess the many uses of land and natural resources** across the nation.

· Rep. Luján supported the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act that included an **amendment he offered that aims to reduce wildfire risks associated with invasive species**. The FLAME Act establishes a permanent **fund for fighting catastrophic wildland fires and establishes a cohesive wildland fire management strategy**.

· In addition, Rep. Luján helped to pass the Water Quality Investment Act, which is a renewed commitment **to address our nation's substantial needs for water and wastewater infrastructure**. The ability of cities, rural water systems and tribal communities to ensure water quality for our nation's families is critical to the health of our country and will help create jobs.

Giving a Voice to Indian Country

Rep. Luján grew up in Nambe, a small community that is nestled between two Pueblos. The 3rd Congressional District is rich in culture and tradition. It includes 19 Pueblo tribes, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and the Navajo Nation. The indigenous communities in this region have lived in the same location longer than any other cultures in the country. These tribal communities add to the 3rd Congressional District's diverse culture in a myriad of ways. In Congress, Rep. Lujan is working on behalf of Native Americans.

· **Rep. Luján has fought to ensure that Native Americans benefit from health insurance reform as well--language to permanently reauthorize the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (IHCIA)** , which governs the Indian Health Care System (IHS), is included in the Affordable Health Care for America Act. IHS is the provider of choice for many Native American patients. Unfortunately, IHCIA was last reauthorized in 1992, and that reauthorization expired eight years ago. Reauthorization will allow much-needed reforms to the Indian Health Service to move forward. Rep. Luján wrote a letter to House leadership asking for the inclusion of language to permanently reauthorize the IHCIA.

· In the American Clean Energy and Security Act, Rep. Luján worked to **incorporate language in the Innovation Hubs section of the bill that supports Tribal Colleges** . The Energy Innovation Hubs are made up of consortia of university and private research communities, industry, national laboratories, and other energy innovation participants to develop and transfer clean energy technology into the marketplace. Rep. Luján's language specifies that, in establishing three of the eight Energy Innovation Hubs under this section, the Secretary of Energy is required to give special consideration to consortium applicants that include at least one Hispanic Serving Institution or Tribal College.

Serving the People of New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District

Rep. Luján has toured the 3rd Congressional District to hear from the people of New Mexico, and he has put great emphasis on maintaining communication with his constituents on the issues that matter to them. Rep. Luján has visited every county in the district, talking with the people of New Mexico about the issues facing them. In 2009, Rep. Luján traveled over 16,000 miles in the district by making 180 visits to local communities. Rep. Luján has responded to approximately 50,000 letters and emails from the people of New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District.

Holding Events in the District

Rep. Luján has held 44 Congress on Your Corners, 19 open office hours, 9 town halls, and 2 telephone town halls. He has visited 21 schools to talk with our teachers and students. Rep. Luján also has held 19 economic development events, 15 clean energy events, 13 veterans events, and 8 events during his "Lend a Hand" service tour. In addition, Rep. Luján has also participated in approximately 240 other events, including groundbreakings, speeches, tours, roundtables, forums, fairs, and many others.

Fighting for the People of New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District

Rep. Luján has made constituent service a priority. Since he took office, Rep. Luján's office has

opened 916 cases and closed 581. Rep. Luján has helped veterans resolve problems with the VA, seniors get payments they are entitled to (including Medicare and Social Security payments), and others cut through the red tape to get the answers they need.